

WESTERN STATE COLLEGE OF LAW

EVIDENCE 213B

Fall 2026 SYLLABUS

Wednesdays and first four Mondays

6:30 PM- 9:20 PM

4 Units

Professor Jeffrey Bretoi

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1. Objectives and Learning Outcomes:

This course has two objectives. First and foremost, the course will assist you to develop the analytical skills which are essential for you to “handle” evidence issues, i.e., to identify from the facts the appropriate issues to be addressed and to address these issues by ***creatively and intelligently*** applying the rules of evidence to the facts. Part of this process will be the development of an approach to analyzing evidence issues. Second, the course will provide you with an introductory survey of most of the important issues in evidence law. This will include how the 6th Amendment Right of Confrontation preempts any statutory evidence rule in criminal cases.

Evidence issues arise in criminal and civil proceedings; and they arise both in the pretrial phase of the matter and at trial. Our goal in this course will be several fold: (i) first, as with virtually all law school courses, we will learn and understand both Federal and California “rules”, as well as the interpretive case law; (ii) we will practice applying the rules to real life practice problems; and (iii) in the process, we will exercise that most important of all lawyer skills, imagination, in creating arguments for and against the admissibility of particular evidence.

Because of time limitations, some evidence topics, such as presumptions and judicial notice, will not be addressed. These are, however, important areas of evidence law. Students can obtain a basic understanding of these topics from Capra & Saltzburg’s Principles of Evidence- Concise Hornbook Series, a respected and concisely written hornbook (see infra “Optional Books”). After completing the current course, students can develop a more refined understanding and mastery of these and other evidence issues by taking one or more advanced evidence electives such as Advanced Trial Advocacy, Evidence Practice, Trial Practice Civil, or Trial Practice Criminal. Consult the W.S.C.L. Catalog for course descriptions.

It is expected that when you have completed this course, you will be able to: i) demonstrate knowledge of substantive evidence law; ii) argue the admissibility of evidence in different contexts by applying the evidence rules that you have learned; iii) identify the evidentiary issues implicated in any fact pattern and apply the learned rules to reach the appropriate conclusions about the admissibility of the evidence at issue; iv) effectively communicate the issues involved, the legal argument and the proper analysis both verbally and in writing; v) identify the legislative history and social policy behind each of the evidence rules.

2. Required Texts:

Evidence: Cases and Material, Roger Park and Richard Friedman (West Academic, 2019/Thirteenth edition)

2023 Supplement to Park & Friedman, Evidence (13th ed.)

Federal & California Evidence Rules, Thomas Leach and Emily Uhrig, (Aspen Publishing, 2026-2027 edition)

3. Optional Books:

Principles of Evidence- Concise Hornbook Series, Capra & Saltzburg (West Academic, 2022/9th edition)

A Student's Guide to Hearsay, Clifford Fishman (Carolina Academic, 2018/5th edition)

4. "In-Class" Methodology:

Evidence law was, at one time, universally derived from case law (common law). Today, many jurisdictions have codified their respective laws of evidence including the federal courts, in the *Federal Rules of Evidence* (FRE) and California, in the *California Evidence Code* (CEC). However, even in these jurisdictions, case law interpretation of the evidence codes still shapes and refines the rules of evidence. Therefore, the "case method," with which you are already familiar, will be used extensively in-class to develop your ability to apply the codes in different factual context. You are expected to brief all the assigned reading cases and analyze each of the problems and hypotheticals in the Park & Friedman Casebook and bring that casebook and the Leach & Uhrig rules book to each class session.

Both the Federal Rules and the California Code are bar-tested subjects. This means that, when you take the California Bar Exam (and, therefore, exams in this class), you will be tested on the FRE and the California Evidence Code. For this reason, *both* the Federal Rules of Evidence *and* the California Evidence Code are the centerpiece of this course. There are some *major differences* between the FRE and the California Evidence Code, as well as major differences in California evidence law between admissibility of evidence in criminal as compared to civil cases.

Therefore, when the assigned casebook material refers to a Federal Rule of Evidence, read both the text of the rule in Appendix A of the Park & Friedman casebook and the related legislative history in Appendix B. As with any statutory material, legislative history is an essential legal resource for statutory interpretation. When the assigned casebook material refers to a section of the California Evidence Code, read the text of that section in Appendix D of the casebook and compare that section with its federal rule counterpart. Please prepare to state in class how a particular California Evidence Code section differs from its FRE counterpart. *California evidence law is a bar-test subject.* You will find the Leach & Uhrig book's comparison of California and Federal evidence code provisions especially useful in this regard.

When an assignment includes a case from a state jurisdiction that has not adopted the Federal Rules of Evidence, please prepare the state in class how you think that case would have been decided under the Federal Rules.

Keep 25 pages ahead of the last class but re-read before each class so you are ready and sharp to participate in classroom discussion of the material.

5. Preparation for Class and Classroom Participation:

Legal education is a co-operative venture that requires your active engagement in class discussion. Class Participation is also a component of the grade in this course. Students are encouraged to ask questions. All views are welcome. A common maxim in law is that “reasonable minds may differ”. You are expected to respect others who disagree with you. The quality of your answers and comments is more important than the quantity.

Class participation is a **mandatory** part of this course. A student whom I deem unprepared will be treated as absent for that day. You will be expected to stay sufficiently ahead of the class in your preparation to ensure your readiness to participate for each class. Neither the assertion that you did not anticipate the class getting so far, nor that you read the assignment too long ago to remember it, will excuse a failure to be prepared for class. **15%** of your semester grade will be based on your **preparation** for class, your **attendance**, your class **participation** and any required **assignments** that must be timely completed or turned in.

Vocabulary is important. Effective lawyers talk and write like lawyers. Use of the correct word(s) and complete, coherent sentences is not a sinister requirement of overly picayune law professors. It is essential to the effective study and practice of law. You may find a word or expression in your reading for which you just don’t know the meaning. Rather than meandering “in a fog”, try to find or ask about the meaning.

I will **randomly** call on students in class to describe cases or rules and to answer questions. **There will be no such thing as a “free pass” day as there is normally no such thing in practice. An “I don’t know” answer will be unacceptable the entire semester.** Please note, **however, that there is a significant difference between being unprepared and being unable to answer a particular question.** No one knows the answer to every law-related question. You will **not** be downgraded or ridiculed for venturing an incorrect answer. You should, however, be sufficiently familiar with the cases, notes, questions and problems to discuss when called upon to do so. As you probably observed during other semesters, classroom participation has several benefits. First, if well done, it helps the entire class. Second, it enables you to test your knowledge and understanding. The more you test the better you will understand the material. Finally, clear oral communication is one of the essentials of a high-quality legal work life. Among other reasons for you to be prepared is that it is fairly inconsiderate of the time and efforts of your fellow students and your professor to come to class unprepared.

Preparation is a component of the grade in this course. Students are expected to have carefully read and briefed all cases (including dissenting/concurring opinions) and to have read and analyzed each of the casebook problems scheduled for discussion in class. You are expected, on average, to spend at least 2 hours of preparation for every one hour of class time. During the first four weeks of the semester, we meet twice a week, and it is estimated that, on average, the assigned reading and other classroom preparation should require 12 or more hours outside of class for each week. Thereafter, as we meet once a week, classroom preparation should require 6 or more hours outside of class for each class session. Each student should be prepared to be called upon in class to summarize the **pertinent facts**, issues, law and court findings and rulings of a case and/or discuss the resolution of any of the assigned casebook problems. The quality of the recitation is more important than the quantity. A **concise** summary of the **pertinent facts** is far better than a recitation of all the facts (many of those are not relevant to the evidentiary issues presented) in the case. In order to discuss a case intelligently in the limited time available in class, students should prepare a brief to assist them in recitation and discussion and have it readily available if called upon

in class. In other words, students should not be fumbling through their textbooks or computer screens to find their “brief”. Book briefing is a poor idea and is discouraged; it is not an effective and acceptable sole method of briefing; it also often causes delays in the presentation of cases in class. Be prepared to discuss the problems, notes and comments from the casebook.

6. Exams and Grading:

There will be a “closed-book” midterm exam in Essay format (and perhaps Multiple Choice also) which will count as 15% of your final grade. There will also be a four-hour “closed-book” final examination which will count as 70% of your final grade. The final exam will consist of an essay component (and perhaps a multiple-choice component). **The final examination may test you on any material assigned in the Park & Friedman Casebook, as well as any material covered in class and class assignments or other exercises.** The remaining 15% of your semester grade will be based on your preparation for class, your attendance, your class participation and timely completion of all required assignments. As the semester progresses, I may indicate in class and/or Lexis Classroom any additional required assignments. It is your responsibility to be aware of any such assignments and their due dates. You should check the Lexis Classroom site regularly for any changes in the syllabus and/or any assignments.

After the first weeks of class, some past essay examinations will be placed on Lexis Classroom; you can use those as practice exams. As the semester progresses, if you would like feedback on your answers to some of these exam questions, please make an appointment. You must email me your exam question and answer at least 2 days before your consultation so that I can review them beforehand.

Writing is important. Even though many evidence issues are initially decided “on the run” in the midst, for example, of testimony by a witness, most lawyers write more than they talk. Practice good writing as much as you can. Write in short complete sentences and short paragraphs using proper grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization and syntax. Every single written opinion in our text and every single formal rule of evidence is the product of someone’s attempt to do some very careful, lawyerly writing.

7. Attendance & Decorum

Successful completion of this course is dependent upon satisfaction of the W.S.C.L. Attendance Policy, which is reprinted in the Student Handbook. If you arrive late, do not sign the sign-in sheet; you will be deemed “absent” for that session. If you depart early, you may be marked absent for that session. IF YOU MISS MORE THAN FOUR (4) DAY CLASSES OR TWO (2) EVENING CLASSES YOU WILL RECEIVE A GRADE OF “F” AND WILL NOT BE PERMITTED TO ATTEND SUBSEQUENT CLASSES.

ALSO BE AWARE THAT, PURSUANT TO W.S.U.L.’S ATTENDANCE POLICY, STUDENTS CANNOT MAKE UP AN ABSENCE BY ATTENDING ANOTHER PROFESSOR’S CLASS.

Students leaving and returning to their seats, while class is in session, disrupts the concentration of students and, therefore, the learning environment. Therefore, once class begins, students may not leave the classroom prior to the end of the session, or (for the evening class) prior to the scheduled break, unless you let me know, in advance, that you have a particular physical condition that renders you unable to comply with this rule. Violation of this rule may be deemed an “early departure” for which a student may be marked absent. Also, *please turn off your cell phones during class.*

8. Office Hours: By appointment.

A word from the experience of the past: many students who should have seen me during office hours did not. If you feel lost or confused, you should do everything you can to get yourself to where you understand the material. This includes getting help from me outside of class. I have flexible office hours. Please make appointments by emailing me at jbretoi@mercuryinsurance.com to schedule a mutually convenient appointment. If you are running late for an appointment or if you cannot keep a scheduled appointment, please email me to cancel.

9. Seating Chart:

A seating chart will be distributed at the beginning of the second-class session. Please print your name legibly in the seat you choose for your permanent seat. If you wish to change your seat, please notify me so that I can make the appropriate changes on the chart.

10. Webcourse: Lexis Classroom

To register for the online portion of the course you will need to use Lexis Classroom. You can access this by going to [Http://www.LexisNexis.com/LawSchool](http://www.LexisNexis.com/LawSchool). Click on Lexis Classroom on the top bar and select “add course” to open the course selection page. Select Evidence 213B (Fall 2026).

11. Disability Service Statement

Western State College of Law provides accommodations to qualified students with disabilities. The Disabilities Services Office assists qualified students with disabilities in acquiring reasonable and appropriate accommodations and in supporting equal access to services, programs, and activities at Western State College of Law.

To seek reasonable accommodations, a student must contact Senior Assistant Dean Donna Espinoza, Student Services Director and Disabilities Services Coordinator, whose office is in the Library Building, Room 275-B. Dean Espinoza’s phone number and email address are: (714) 459-1117; despinoza@wsulaw.edu. When seeking accommodations, a student should notify Dean Espinoza of her or his specific limitations and, if known, her or his specific requested accommodations. Students who seek accommodations will be asked to supply medical documentation of the need for accommodation. Classroom accommodations are not retroactive, but are effective only upon the student sharing approved accommodations with the instructor or professor. Therefore, students are encouraged to request accommodations as early as feasible with Dean Espinoza to allow for time to gather necessary documentation. If you have a concern or complaint in this regard, please notify Dean Espinoza; or please notify Dean Halim Dhanidina at hdhanidina@wsulaw.edu or (714) 459-1168. Complaints will be handled in accordance with the College of Law’s “Policy against Discrimination and Harassment.”

12. Western State College of Law – Programmatic Learning Outcomes

Western State College of Law’s curriculum is designed so that every student achieves a level of competency prior to graduation in each of the eight Programmatic Learning Outcomes listed below:

(1) Doctrinal Knowledge

Students will demonstrate knowledge of substantive and procedural law in the core curriculum subjects, including Contracts, Criminal Law, Criminal Procedure, Torts, Real Property, Business Association, Evidence, Civil Procedures, Constitutional Law, Estates, Community Property, Remedies, and Professional Responsibility.

(2) Practice Skills

Students will demonstrate the development of other law practice skills. Each student's chosen outcomes within this category will be varied based on the student's particular interests, coursework and work experiences. They may include, but are not limited to, the following topics: oral presentation and advocacy; interviewing; counseling; client service and business development; negotiations, mediation, arbitration, or other alternate dispute resolution methods; advanced legal research and writing (excluding purely academic papers and the first four units earned in introductory first-year legal research and writing class); applied legal writing such as drafting contracts, pleadings, other legal instruments; law practice management or the use of technology in law practice; cultural competency; collaboration or project management; financial analysis, such as accounting, budgeting project management, and valuation; cost benefit analysis in administrative agencies; use of technology, data analyses, or predictive coding; business strategy and behavior; pre-trial preparation, fact investigation, such as discovery, e-discovery, motion practice, assessing evidence, or utilizing experts; trial practice; professional civility and applied ethics; a law clinic that includes a classroom component; or a legal externship that includes a classroom component.

(3) Legal Analysis

Students will demonstrate the ability to identify the factual and legal issues implicated by a fact pattern and to appropriately use cases (including identifying the salient features of an appropriate precedent case, identifying legally significant similarities or differences between the precedent case and a fact pattern and explaining why those are legally significant) and rules (including the ability to connect legally significant facts in a fact pattern to the rule) to predict how a court would decide the issue. Students will also demonstrate the ability to identify and evaluate the public policies of a precedent case or rule, and be able to evaluate how public policy can impact the application of a rule to the legal issue.

(4) Legal Research

Students will demonstrate the ability to locate relevant legal authority using a variety of book and electronic resources, and to properly cite to such legal authority.

(5) Communication

Students will demonstrate the ability to communicate both orally and in writing in a manner appropriate to a particular task to effectively convey the author or speaker's ideas. This includes audience sensitivity in written and oral communication (the ability to adopt a tone, style and level of detail appropriate to the needs, knowledge and expertise of the audience); and written communication basic proficiency (the ability to use the conventions of grammar, spelling, punctuation, diction and usage appropriate to the task and sufficient to convey effectively the author's ideas).

(6) Advocacy of Legal Argument

Students will demonstrate the ability, in both oral and written formats, to evaluate the legal, economic and social strengths and weaknesses of a case and use case and statutory authority as well as public policy to persuade others. Making policy-based arguments includes the ability to identify and evaluate the public policies of a precedent case or rule and their implications, and be able to assert such appropriate arguments to support a particular application or distinction of a precedent case to a legal controversy or a particular resolution of the application of a rule to the legal controversy.

(7) Client Sensitivity and Cultural Competency

Students will demonstrate an awareness of clients' needs and goals, including a sensitivity to clients' background and circumstances (including, but not limited to, socio-economic, gender, race, ethnicity, educational, disability and/or religious background(s)), the ability to make decisions that reflect an appropriate focus on those needs and goals, and awareness that cultural issues may affect the relevance of facts and application of the law.

(8) Legal Ethics

Students will demonstrate the ability to identify ethical issues in law practice contexts and make appropriate decisions to resolve such issues.

13. Reading and Other Assignments: It is estimated that, on average, the assigned reading and other classroom preparation should require six (6) or more hours outside of class for each class session.

EVIDENCE 213B FALL 2026 Syllabus

Week	Subject	Reading Assignment	<i>Computer Aided Instruction Assignment/ Federal Rules of Evidence California Evidence Code Multiple Choice Assignments</i>
August 17, 19	"Making the Record"	1-74	
	Introduction to Relevance and Inference (Logical Relevance)	75-84	FRE 401, 402 CEC 210, 350, 351, 500- 522
	Discretion to exclude (Legal Relevance)	87-96; 100-109 (including <i>Ballou v. Henri Studios</i>)	FRE 403; CEC 352 FRE 105; CEC 355 FRE 106; CEC 356
	Character Evidence (start)	109-130	FRE 404, 405, 406; CEC 1100 - 1105
August 24, 26	Character Evidence (finish)	131-151	FRE 404, 405, 406; CEC 1100 - 1105
	Prior Sexual Conduct	151-172	FRE 412-415; CEC 1103, 1106 - 1109
	Relevance and its Counterweights (start)	172-192	

Week	Subject	Reading Assignment	<i>Computer Aided Instruction Assignment/ Federal Rules of Evidence California Evidence Code Multiple Choice Assignments</i>
August 31	Relevance and its Counterweights • Similar Happenings • Subsequent Precautions • Offers to Compromise • Payment of Medical Expenses • Liability Insurance	172-192	FRE 407, 408, 409, 410, 411 CEC 1151, 1152, 1153, 1154, 1155
September 2	Competency of Witnesses Impeachment • Impeaching One's Own Witness • Contradiction • Collateral Matter Rule Impeachment- FRE 608 • Character for Truthfulness & Untruthfulness	699-707 485-501 501-515	FRE 601-606; CEC 700 -704, 710 - 711, 750, 1150 FRE 607-615 CEC 765-773, 780, 785, 1235, 1236 FRE 608 CEC 786, 787, 790
September 9	Impeachment- FRE 609 • Prior Convictions Impeachment • Bias Impeachment • Prior Statements • Psychiatric Condition	515- 534 534- 541 541-554 555-562	FRE 609 CEC 452.5, 787, 788 CEC 780 FRE 611-613; 801(d); CEC 765, 768 - 771, 780, 791, 1235, 1236
September 14	Writings • Best Evidence Rule • Authentication Lay Opinion Expert Opinion (start)	669-697 781-802 802-840	FRE 1001-1008; CEC 1520-1523, 1530-1532, 1550, 1553 FRE 901-903; CEC 1400-1421; 1450-1454 FRE 701; CEC 800 FRE 702-706; CEC 801-805
September 16	Expert Opinion Scientific Evidence	802-840 840-862 873-879 890-894	FRE 702-706; CEC 801-805, 720, 721, 722

Week	Subject	Reading Assignment	Computer Aided Instruction Assignment/ Federal Rules of Evidence California Evidence Code Multiple Choice Assignments
September 23	Hearsay: Rationales and Meanings	193-234	FRE 801; CEC 1200
	Questions 1-75	234-238	Complete and turn in answers to questions 1-75 by 9/28/26.
September 30	Midterm		
	Introduction to the Confrontation Clause: <i>Crawford v Washington</i>	238-248	6 th Amendment
	Preliminary Questions of Fact		FRE 104(a)(b); CEC 403, 405
	Dying Declarations	367-385	FRE 804(b)(2), 804(b)(6); CEC 1242
October 7	Spontaneous and Contemporaneous Exclamations	280-312	FRE 803(2); CEC 1240 FRE 803(1); CEC 1241
October 14	Opposing Party's Statement (Admissions)	249-280	FRE 801(d)(2) CEC 1220-1223
October 21	Former Testimony	342-353	FRE 804(b)(1); CEC 1290-1293
	Declarations Against Interest	353-367	FRE 804(b)(3); CEC 1230
October 28	State of Mind/Physical Condition (Hillmon Doctrine)	312-337	FRE 803(3); CEC 1250, 1251, 1252, 1260, 1261
	Statement of Medical Diagnosis or Treatment	337-342	FRE 803(4); CEC 1253
November 4	Prior Identification	385-391	FRE 801(d)(1)(C); CEC 1238
	Past Recollection Recorded	391-399	FRE 803(5); CEC 1237
	Business and Public Records	399-454	FRE 803(6), 803(7); CEC 1270-1280
November 10	Multiple Levels of Hearsay		FRE 805; CEC 1201
	Statements Describing Child Abuse or Domestic Abuse	454-463	
	Prior Judgments	463-466	FRE 803(22); CEC 1300
	Prior Inconsistent Statement	546-551	FRE 801(d)(1)(A); CEC 1235

	Prior Consistent Statement	551-553	FRE 801(d)(1)(B); CEC 1236, 791
	Residual Exception	468-474	FRE 807 (None in CA)
	Questions 76-125	480-484	<i>Complete and turn in answers to questions 76-125 by 11/16/26.</i>
November 18	Privileges • Attorney-Client • Physician-Patient & Psychotherapist • Marital • Clergy Misc (optional reading)	563-593 593-603 610-617 617-622 623- 667	FRE 501; CEC 911-919, 950-962 CEC 990-1007 CEC 1010-1027 CEC 970-973; 980-987 CEC 1030-1034 Optional Reading: CEC 930, 940, 965-968, 1035-1070